



WESTERN CAUCUS NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 18, 2005

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Private Property Task Force Created

Rep. C.L. "Butch" Otter to lead

Washington, D.C. – Today the Congressional Western Caucus announced the formation of a Property Rights Task Force. The Caucus Property Rights Task Force will provide a forum for Members to discuss proposals for enhancing protection of private property rights while helping to draw attention to this critical issue. Caucus Chairman, Rep. Chris Cannon (UT-03), has asked Rep. C.L. "Butch" Otter (ID-01) to head the Task Force.

Rep. Otter said, "I'm honored to have the confidence and support of my Western colleagues in pursuing this important cause. We in the West understand like few others how precious and fragile our constitutional protections against government intrusion can be. I am committed to holding every level of government – from cities and counties to Congress and the courts – to the standard our Founders established and which has enabled America to thrive."

Rep. Cannon said, "Recent court decisions have highlighted the danger facing our property rights. Congress needs to focus its attention on protecting the fundamental right to own property. Butch Otter has been a stalwart advocate for such rights since his first day in Congress. He is the ideal candidate to head up a task force dedicated to preserving these rights for all Americans."

In addition to Reps. Cannon and Otter, members of the task force include: Rep. Jeff Flake (AZ-06), Rep. Barbara Cubin (WY-At Large), Rep. Henry Bonilla (TX-23), Rep. Joel Hefley (CO-05), Rep. Cathy McMorris (WA-05), Rep. Stevan Pearce (NM-02), Rep. Jim Gibbons (NV-02), Rep. Wally Herger (CA-02), and Rep. Dennis Rehberg (MT-At Large). The Western Caucus believes that property rights are the foundation of a free society and that the federal government should be required to compensate property owners when regulations deprive them of the use of their property.

Rep. Cubin said, "The recent Kelo decision by the Supreme Court shows that our private property rights are still under attack. This task force will help us focus attention on the threats that exist to one of the most fundamental rights of the American people. Congress must remember that the government should be protecting private property rights, not threatening them."

Rep. Rehberg said, "Gumby would have been proud of the Supreme Court, what with its ability to stretch and contort the Fifth Amendment to allow government to feed itself with higher tax revenues by handing private property over to developers. The Property Rights Task Force will give us opportunity to address the heart of what Montanans believe in: preserving small business and protecting homeownership."

"The Framers of the Constitution went to great lengths to ensure that property rights were protected in the U.S.," said Rep. Flake. "Unfortunately, as recent court decisions have shown, it's important that lawmakers keep up the fight."

The Western Caucus is comprised of members of Congress committed to protecting the interests and ideals of the West. More information on the Caucus can be found at: <http://www.house.gov/cannon/wc/index.htm>.

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